

*Remarks of
Karen Schweikert-Mangino
Middle School Teacher*

**Before the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

February 21, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Karen Schweikert-Mangino and I am a middle school teacher. I love teaching students how to write well and how to read well, but what I love most is helping them become the people they have the potential to be. I began my teaching career ten years ago because I had a sincere, heartfelt desire to make an impact in children's lives.

I have worked tirelessly to become a good teacher. I have earned one and a half master's degrees. I have attended numerous workshops. I have read countless books. All in the pursuit of learning as much as I can so I can help others learn as much as they can. Unfortunately, I have recently learned of a possible bill that would render my hard work, time, and money almost meaningless. Instead of a profession of education valuing educational pursuits, the bill would create a profession that is indifferent to the knowledge base of teachers.

I chose my profession not only to enjoy a lifetime of learning for myself, but also because of certain securities that I felt were priorities. I wanted a career with a predictable pay scale, not one that could change on a yearly basis. I wanted a career where I knew that after I gave everything I had to it for decades of my life I would be rewarded by a secure retirement. I wanted a career that would help me better myself as I worked to better the lives of others. The proposed bill takes all of this away, leaving me with few incentives to continue in a career with increasingly demanding and stressful requirements.

In recent years, teachers have been required to do more with less. Even in the face of the new mandates put forth by the state, I have seen my fellow coworkers rise to the challenge, knowing that by adapting and changing they would also learn and become better teachers. The reward for the hard work my coworkers and I have put forth is to have the things that we value come to an end. The reward for hard work is to have our learning and expertise disrespected and devalued.

I want to go on record that I am very disappointed and upset by this proposed bill.